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STUART NEEDLEWORK. CHARLES I, QUEEN AND ATTENDANTS  
RECENTLY ACQUIRED

## RECENTLY ACQUIRED FABRICS

Two interesting additions have recently been made to the textile department by the purchase of a piece of stump or "embossed" needlework of the Stuart period, and a XVII Century Persian brocade.

Much has been written regarding the origin of stump work. We know that it was a popular diversion of the women of royalist households during the reign of James I through the Commonwealth to Charles II.

Though perhaps these works of the Stuart and Tudor periods are a little stiff and ungainly, there is a

quaint beauty and charm about them that is all their own, and some of the best specimens carried out by highly skilled workers attain artistic distinction by reason of the perfection of their craftsmanship.

The term "embossed," an old English word, was used on account of the raised portions being stuffed with pieces of silk, cotton, wool or even wood. The coverings were worked in the most exquisite stitches, taken from examples of old lace and Oriental embroideries. In some pieces we find a great deal of gold,

silver, colored lace and passementerie used. These materials were made by the workers and were often more difficult of execution than the embroidery itself.

The example acquired for the Institute is done on linen and was evidently the top of a fitted work casket. The scene shows Charles I and his Queen, Henrietta Maria, grouped with attendants. The scattered floral forms, birds, and beasts, with the inevitable castle (probably Whitehall) in the background, are much repeated motifs in the stump-work of this period.

These flowers, birds and animals all have symbolical significance. The lion signifies adherence to the crown; the rose is the symbol of the Tudor family, and the strawberry denotes the queen's descent from the Frazer clan of Scotland. Thus we might find a symbolical meaning for almost every one of the many objects represented in the piece.

The figures are richly apparelled in the costumes of the period. The

crowns of the king and queen are set with seed pearls and their robes are trimmed with collars and cuffs of genuine petit-point lace. The piece shows Stuart embroidery at its best period—that of the reign of Charles I.

The XVII Century Persian brocade is  $23\frac{3}{4}$  x 27 inches. The motif is the famous Shah Abbas motif, which originated in this century during the reign of Shah Abbas the Great. It consists of a large and mature but not quite fully opened flower, framed by the outline of a symmetrical pointed leaf. In this piece it is worked in gold thread and green silk with the center of the flower in bright red. This design, held together by a tracery of vines, is enclosed in a diaper pattern of a red and green rope-like effect, which runs through the piece. The background is a rich blue. It illustrates the extraordinary success with which the Persians were able to combine brilliant colors in close contrast, toning and blending them into rich harmonies.

J. W.

## THE HISTORY OF WRITING AND PRINTING ON EXHIBITION IN THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM ROOM

The present exhibit in the Children's Museum Room is an attempt to trace, in a more or less sketchy manner, by means of photographs, facsimiles and specimens, the history of writing and printing from early picture writing down to the best type of printed book of our own

time. The main portion of this exhibit, however, relates primarily to the historical development of the book in Western Europe and the United States.

To assist those who may wish to follow the historical order of the exhibit, numbers have been placed